

In Reprisal, Gunmen Kill 15 Persons In Sokoto



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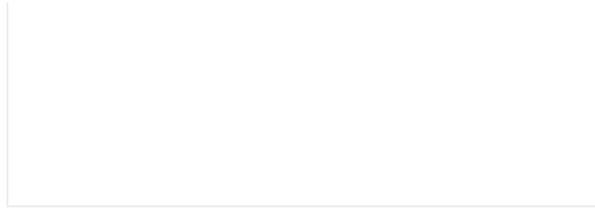


Suspected members of the Lakurawa group have killed 15 people in an attack on Kwalajiya village in Tangaza Local Government Area of Sokoto State.

The assault, which took place around 2:00 pm on Tuesday, is believed to be a reprisal following the killing of three members of the group, including a suspected leader, during a failed earlier attack on the community.

A local leader, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the gunmen stormed the village while residents were observing the Zuhr (afternoon) prayer.

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“We were in the mosque when they invaded in large numbers.

“They opened fire indiscriminately, targeting both worshippers and villagers working on their farms,” the source said.

He added that security personnel and the chairman of the local government area were present in the community on Wednesday to attend the burial of the victims.

“This is the first time Lakurawa members have attacked our village directly.

“But I believe it was a retaliatory strike after three of their members were killed in a failed attack,” he said.

Another community source said the violence may have been triggered by local resistance to the group’s influence.

According to him, a village leader had recently warned residents against allowing their daughters to marry members of the group, a decision that reportedly angered the Lakurawa.

“They were not happy with this stance and decided to attack us.

“We are calling on the government to act swiftly before they wipe us out and seize control of our communities,” the source added.

Attackers kill men, burn farms, destroy communication mast

Another resident of the affected community said the assailants set fire to farmlands and torched several homes.

“They didn’t harm or kill any women, but they killed our men and destroyed all our food items, including those being sold in shops. They also burned down some houses,” the resident said.

Following the attack, the entire community has been deserted, with many residents fleeing to nearby towns for safety.

“I’m currently staying with my relatives in the city, while some of our people have relocated to Gidan Madi, the headquarters of Tangaza Local Government Area,” she added.

She said the attackers also destroyed the community’s telecommunications mast, effectively cutting off all mobile network access.

“We are calling on the government to deploy security operatives to our community and restore our telecommunications network, which we rely on to report the attackers’ movements to local authorities and security agencies,” the resident appealed.

Spokesman of the Sokoto State Police Command, DSP Ahmed Rufa’i, confirmed the incident but said the exact number of casualties had yet to be verified.

A source in the LGA confirmed that 15 people were killed in the attack, while seven others sustained gunshot injuries and were taken to the hospital for treatment.

“We have just concluded the burial of the victims,” he said, adding that additional security personnel are expected to be deployed to the area to prevent further violence.

A pattern of violence

The latest assault is part of an escalating campaign of terror linked to the Lakurawa group, which has repeatedly targeted rural communities across the Tangaza Local Government Area of Sokoto State.

Just last week, eight people were killed in an attack on the Sabiyo community. The same group reportedly raided Baiji village, rustling livestock before being repelled by military forces.

“They shot seven people—six died on the spot, while one with a gunshot wound to the neck is currently receiving treatment at the Specialist Hospital in Sokoto,” said Ghazali Rakah, Special Adviser to the Tangaza LGA Chairman.

He explained that the attackers struck late at night, limiting the military’s ability to pursue them.

“They attempted to invade Sanyinna village too, but withdrew upon spotting a military presence. Our security situation is dire. These attackers operate at will. The government must act decisively,” he added.

Just three weeks ago, an improvised explosive device (IED) linked to the same group killed seven people, including a woman.

The victims, returning from a Sallah celebration in Gwabro village, reportedly stopped to rest under a tree commonly used by patrolling troops. Six died instantly; a seventh victim, a young girl, succumbed to her injuries the next day.

In May, the group was also blamed for a deadly ambush that claimed the lives of 13 seasonal hunters in the Hurumi forest, Talewa ward.

Amid the worsening security situation, a security expert, Squadron Leader Aminu Bala Sokoto (Rtd.), urged the government to deploy well-armed community guards to support conventional forces.

Speaking to our reporter in Sokoto, the retired air force officer said, “Our security operatives are overwhelmed. Insecurity exists in nearly every region, and we simply don’t have enough personnel to go around,” he said.

Bala-Sokoto urged the Sokoto State Government to take a more proactive role by recruiting, training, and equipping community protection guards, particularly for deployment to high-risk areas.

He also called for military support, especially from the Nigerian Army and Air Force.

“These terrorists appear to have a deep fear of fighter jets and helicopters. Deploying community guards backed by air and ground support is, in my view, the most effective strategy to confront this threat,” he said.

Sokoto State Government officials have assured that they are taking the threat seriously. Retired Colonel Ahmed Usman, Special Adviser on Security to Governor Ahmed Aliyu, told our reporter that the administration is working closely with military and police forces.